

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/10/2020 7:35:17 AM

First name: Doug

Last name: Riddle

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Supervisor Jewett,

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the US Forest Service plan titled:
"Foothills Landscape Project".

This Project encompasses 157,625 acres which is 18% of the Chattahoochee Oconee National Forest (CONF) here in Georgia. That is a Huge amount of forest to be altered by man on the many fronts outlined in the Foothills Landscape Project. Considering that the CONF is just 2+% of the land area of Georgia; this Project is massive in impact to both the forest as well as the 2.9 Million visitors to CONF and 10+ Million residents of Georgia.

While the US Forest Service has spent 4+ years Planning the Foothills Landscape Project; that could be 4% or less time than 100+ years that the Forest itself may need to recover from cutting trees to build roads, use of herbicides over thousands of acres (a poison to more than just the intended plants it kills), use of pesticides over thousands of acres (a poison to more than just the Gypsy moth its intended to kill), thinning forest for a woodlands environment for certain plants, birds & animals, and other mankind planned alternations to our Forest.

Let the CONF be as it was intended to be: a Forest. Our eastern Mountains, The Appalachians, have evolved over Millions of years. Mother Nature has a plan that she is following and her plan is based on millions of years of evolution. The Foothills Landscape Project is a 4 year plan in the making to alter 18% of the set aside Forest here in Georgia. Please don't enact these massive manmade changes to the CONF.

Let NATURE care for the CONF, and all of us who love a Forest OBSERVE AND PROTECT. 2+% of Forest in Georgia to protect as is, isn't much to ask given mankind's control over the other 98% of the land.

There is one example of a Forest here in the Southeast that I'd like to suggest as an example of a Forest being left alone and 10,000,000 people per year come to enjoy it. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP) became an 800,000+acre National Park in the late 1930's.

For 80+ years GSMNP with its mountains, diverse forests, plants, trees, animals & life therein has existed as its own entity. Mankind, the staff of GSMNP, observe and protect. 10,000,000+ people come per year to see these mountains, walk under the full canopy of diverse assortment of trees, go fishing in clear mountain streams, go on day hikes and backpacking trips. The annual Wildflower pilgrimage in late April each year since 1950 draws thousands of people to GSMNP.

CONF is slightly larger in acreage than GSMNP. There isn't a true need to alter CONF per the "Foothills Landscape Project". GSMNP proves daily that its Forest is an environment that draws people to come visit. Please leave the CONF as it is. Let Nature manage her Forest according to Her experience. Let mankind "Observe and Protect" this Forest as is.